Prophet Elias News

News and Views for the Orthodox Church of the Holy Prophet Elias in Devon
April 2024

For service times see Noticeboard on P5

Excerpts from Fr Alexander Schmemann's Great Lent

When a man leaves on a journey, he must know where he is going. Thus with Lent. Above all, Lent is a spiritual journey and its destination is Easter, "the Feast of Feasts." It is the preparation for the "fulfillment of Pascha, the true Revelation." We must begin, therefore, by trying to understand this connection between Lent and Easter, for it reveals something very essential, very crucial about our Christian faith and life.

Is it necessary to explain that Easter is much more than one of the feasts, more than a yearly commemoration of a past event? Anyone who has, be it only once, taken part in that night which is "brighter than the day," who has tasted of that unique joy, knows it. [...] On Easter we celebrate Christ's Resurrection as something that happened and still happens to us. For each one of us received the gift of that new life and the power to accept it and live by it. It is a gift which radically alters our attitude toward everything in this world, including death. It makes it possible for us to joyfully affirm: "Death is no more!" Oh, death is still there, to be sure, and we still face it and someday it will come and take us. But it is our whole faith that by His own death Christ changed the very nature of death, made it a passage — a "passover," a "Pascha" — into the Kingdom of God, transforming the tragedy of tragedies into the ultimate victory. [...]

Such is that faith of the Church, affirmed and made evident by her countless Saints. Is it not our daily experience, however, that this faith is very seldom ours, that all the time we lose and betray the "new life" which we received as a gift, and that in fact we live as if Christ did not rise from the dead, as if that unique event had no meaning whatsoever for us? [...] We simply forget all this — so busy are we, so immersed in our daily preoccupations — and because we forget, we fail. And through this forgetfulness, failure, and sin, our life becomes "old" again — petty, dark, and ultimately meaningless — a meaningless journey toward a meaningless end. [...] We may from time to time acknowledge and confess our various "sins," yet we cease to refer our life to that new life which Christ revealed and gave to us. Indeed, we live as if He never came. This is the only real sin, the sin of all sins, the bottomless sadness and tragedy of our nominal Christianity.

If we realize this, then we may understand what Easter is and why it needs and presupposes Lent. For we may then understand that the liturgical traditions of the Church, all its cycles and services, exist, first of all, in order to help us recover the vision and the taste of that new life which we so easily lose and betray, so that we may repent and return to it. [...] And yet the "old" life, that of sin and pettiness, is not easily overcome and changed. The Gospel expects and requires from man an effort of which, in his present state, he is virtually incapable. [...] This is where Great Lent comes in. This is the help extended to us by the Church, the school of repentance which alone will make it possible to receive Easter not as mere permission to eat, to drink, and to relax, but indeed as the end of the "old" in us, as our entrance into the "new." [...] For each year Lent and Easter are, once again, the rediscovery and the recovery by us of what we were made through our own baptismal death and resurrection.

A journey, a pilgrimage! Yet, as we begin it, as we make the first step into the "bright sadness" of Lent, we see — far, far away — the destination. It is the joy of Easter, it is the entrance into the glory of the Kingdom. And it is this vision, the foretaste of Easter, that makes Lent's sadness bright and our lenten effort a "spiritual spring." The night may be dark and long, but all along the way a mysterious and radiant dawn seems to shine on the horizon. "Do not deprive us of our expectation, O Lover of man!" Glory be to God!

Great Lent *is published by St. Vladimir's Seminary Press which holds the copyright © 1969-2007 and has granted permission to display these excerpts. It is hoped that these selections will entice the reader into obtaining Fr. Schmemann's full work.* Great Lent *is available from the SVS Bookstore, 575 Scarsdale Road, Crestwood, NY 10707; or online at svspress.com*

Prayer Is An Encounter

First of all, it is very important to remember that prayer is an encounter and a relationship, a relationship which is deep, and this relationship cannot be forced either on us or on God. The fact that God can make himself present or can leave us with a sense of his absence is part of this live and real relationship. If we could mechanically draw him into an encounter, force him to meet us, simply because we have chosen this moment to meet him, there would be no relationship and no encounter. We can do that with an image, with the imagination, or with the various idols we can put in front of us instead of God; we can do nothing of the kind with the living God, any more than we can do it with a living person. A relationship must begin and develop in mutual freedom. If you look at the relationship in terms of *mutual* relationship, you will see that God could complain about us a great deal more than we about him. We complain that he does not make himself present to us for the few minutes we reserve for him, but what about the twenty-three and a half hours during which God may be knocking on the door and we answer 'I am busy, I am sorry' or when we do not answer at all because we do not even hear the knock at the door of our heart, of our mind, of our conscience, of our life. So there is a situation in which we have no right to complain of the absence of God, because we are a great deal more absent than he ever is.

Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh in *School for Prayer* Libra 1970

God often visits us, but most of the time we are not at home.

Rev. Kallistratos Adamou in *A Mirror for the Soul* Ilfracombe

Ministry of the Laity
by Fr N. Afanassieff
Part 4: Reviving the Work of the Laity

In the Church the different forms of ministry can only be fulfilled through the gift of the Spirit; hence the persons who fulfill those ministries must be appointed by the Church. Orthodox theology regards ordination in the Church as a sacrament, i.e. as an act of the Church whereby the gifts of the Spirit requested in the Church's prayers are bestowed by God. Ordination, therefore, does not mean the appointment, election or nomination by the congregation of persons whom it would like to fulfill a certain ministry. Neither the bishop himself, nor the congregation by itself, can nominate anyone to a ministry in the Church, for it is God Himself who calls His servants to exercise such ministries. Moreover when the laity are admitted to church-government by election or nomination, the following question arises: if certain laymen participate in the government of the Church, does that really mean that God's people is participating in it?

For God's people it does not matter whether the bishop governs alone or whether he is helped by lay representatives. It does not matter because in both cases the people is not exercising the ministry of witness to which it is called by God, and which is its particular ministry in church-government. The people cannot transfer this ministry to representatives, because it belongs to the people as a whole, and not to separate members. The activity of God's people has nothing to do either with universal suffrage or with representative government, for it depends on grace. The laity, as such, cannot govern and teach in the Church with those who have received the gifts of the Spirit, and who are called to govern and to teach in the House of God.

Ministries Based on the Gifts of the Spirit

We know that the multiplicity of ministries has gradually disappeared from the life of the Church and been replaced in fact by one single ministry: the priesthood. Does not our time demand the revival by the Church of certain ministries which existed in former times, or even the creation of new ministries? Without a doubt, the new conditions in the life of the Church require new ministries. Like the ministries at the time of the apostles, these ministries should be based on the gifts of the Spirit in order to correspond to the nature of the Church. In other words, the persons to whom the Church would entrust these ministries should be appointed by the Church.

If it is indispensable to create a Council for the government of the Church, in addition to the bishop, why not revive the ancient ministry of the presbyters, who would be elected by the Church and established for the ministry of government, as the members of the Presbyterium were in early times? If the hierarchy of the Church seeks persons to be teachers, why not revive the ancient ministry of the Didascales ? But in the strict sense of the word , both will cease to be laity, because they will be accomplishing a special ministry in the Church. By clinging to the legal sphere, we bring about a confusion of ministries, because we admit the laity (who always remain what they are) to ministries which are not within their competence. And according to the will of God, the ministries must not be confused, but differentiated.

Furthermore, in this way we create ministries which are devoid of grace, thus introducing into the Church the notion of differentiation between the sacred and the secular - whereas in reality everything in the Church is sacred, nothing is secular.

Hand in Hand

The revival of the ministries exercised in the early Church should go hand in hand with a revival of the ministry of witness of the whole people, for we must revert to a form of church-life in which the people participates in all its activities. In this connection we should recall the words of Cyprian of Carthage, which have been forgotten during the course of history: "From the very beginning of my episcopacy I made it a rule not to take any decision without your advice (i.e. the advice of the Presbyters) and without the agreement of the people." (Epist. XIV, 4.)

Christians, who are living members of the Body of Christ, live in the Church. Their lives are a constant ministry, which begins as soon as they enter the Church and are established as God's kings and priests. Life in the Church means life with the Church. Hence God's people participates in every manifestation of the Church's life. If any sphere of it were closed to God's people, that would mean either that there is a secular sphere within the Church, or that the faithful have ceased to be God's people.

It is in the sphere of the Liturgy that the ministry of the faithful has been most actively shown; the faithful are, in the real sense of the word, co-ministers with their bishop. In the sphere of church-government and teaching, God's people is governed and taught by those who have been appointed to those ministries. In these spheres the gift of witness belongs to God's people, which testifies that the bishops appointed by God in the sacrament of order are governing and teaching in accordance with God's will. The ministry exercised by the bishop and the ministries exercised by the faithful are different ministries which cannot be confused, but which cannot exist without one another. This difference of ministries is conditioned by the diversity of the gifts of the Spirit. "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all." (1. Cor. 12:4-6.)

Abridged from Fr N Assanieff *Ministry of the Laity* Posted on 18-1-2011 at All Saints of Alaska Orthodox Church
For the full text go to https://www.pravmir.com/ministry-of-the-laity/

We are grateful to Elizabeth Theokritoff for bringing this useful article to our attention. A further range of articles on the role of the Laity in Church life can be found on the website of the Orthodox Church in America at https://www.oca.org/parish-ministry/theology

Supraśl 2024 - A World Gathering of Orthodox Youth

Supraśl, Poland June 30 - July 8, 2024

What is Supraśl 2024?

Supraśl 2024 is an international Orthodox youth gathering organised by Supraśl: A World Fellowship of Orthodox Youth and hosted by the Orthodox Church of Poland and the Fellowship of Orthodox Youth in Poland.
Supraśl 2024 will bring together Orthodox youth to share in worship and fellowship, to encourage each other in their faith in Jesus Christ, to experience the universality of the One Holy Church and to "bear witness of the light" (John 1:7).

Who is it for?

Participation in Supraśl 2024 is open to Orthodox Christian youth aged 16*- 30 (*we invite youth aged 16-17 to participate if accompanied by an adult). Priority will be given to participants who are actively engaged in Orthodox youth work.

How can I participate?

You can apply here now: https://forms.gle/pSmCb35zhW1BmvWi7
The participation fee for Supraśl 2024 is 250€ and includes all meals, accommodations and excursions.

What to expect

First and foremost we will come together in community to pray and worship our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Each day will begin and end with prayers in the cathedral church of the Monastery of the Annunciation.

The theme of Supraśl 2024, "It is Time For the Lord to Act: Liturgy & Creation", will be explored by a series of discussions offered by Archbishop Alexander (Golitzin) of Dallas and the South (Orthodox Church in America) and participants will be encouraged to offer their own reflections on the theme.

Other activities during Supraśl 2024 will include sporting activities like kayaking and volleyball, an excursion to sacred and cultural sites in Eastern Poland, including the Bialoweiza Forest, the oldest strictly preserved medieval forest in Europe and other monasteries and churches.

For more information or to apply go to https://suprasl.org/2024#about

This Month We Celebrate

On Monday April 1st: **Saint Mary of Egypt** (1st C)
We wish **Julia M, Bea P** and all at **Saint Mary of Egypt Sub-Parish** in Uganda a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

On Wednesday 3rd: **Saint Joseph the Hymnographer** (883)

On Saturday 6th: **Saturday of Souls**
Saint Methodios, Equal to the Apostles and Enlightener of the Slavs (885)

On Sunday 7th: **Third Sunday of Great Lent – Veneration of the Holy Cross**
Saint Savas the New of Kalymnos (1948)
Painter of the first icon of his friend Saint Nektarios of Aegina

On Thursday 11th: **Hieromartyr Antipas,** Bishop of Pergamon (92) Disciple of Saint John the Theologian

On Saturday 13th**: Saturday of Souls**
Saint Martin the Confessor, Pope of Rome (655)
We wish **Martin R** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**

On Sunday 14th: **Fourth Sunday of Great Lent – Saint John Climacus of Sinai,** author of *The Ladder (7thC)*

On Monday 15th: **Martyrs Vasilissa** and **Anastasia of Rome** (1st C) Disciples of Saint Peter and Saint Paul

On Tuesday 16th: **Saint Amphilochios** of Patmos (1970)

On Wednesday 17th: **Saint Paisius** the Fool for Christ's Sake of the Kyiv/Kiev Caves (1893)

On Friday 19th: **Saint Alphege**, Archbishop of Canterbury (1012)

On Saturday 20th: **Saint Caedwalla**, King of the West Saxons (689)

On Sunday 21st: **Fifth Sunday of Great Lent – Saint Mary of Egypt**

On Monday 22nd: **Apostles Nathaniel, Luke and Clement** (1stC)

On Tuesday 23rd: ***Holy, Glorious Great Martyr George*** (*Services transferred to May 6th*)

On Wednesday 24th: **Hieromartyrs Joseph, Elias and Sabas**, Metropolitans of Transylvania (17th – 18th)

On Thursday 25th: **Holy Apostle and Evangelist Mark** *(Services transferred to May 7th)*

On Saturday 27th: **Lazarus Saturday**

On Sunday 28th: **ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM (Palm Sunday)**

On Monday 29th: **Great and Holy Monday**
Commemoration of Blessed Joseph the All- Righteous,
and of the Unfruitful Fig-Tree that was Cursed by Christ
Saint Endellion (Endelienta) (Cornwall - ?6thC)

On Tuesday 30th: **Great and Holy Tuesday**
Commemoration of the Parable of the Ten Virgins
Holy Apostle James the Son of Zebedee, Brother of Saint John the Theologian

Go Mariela!

Our brave Mariela will be running in this year's London Marathon on April 21st to raise funds for **Phab,** an organisation which inspires and supports disabled and non-disabled children and young people to make more of life together - breaking down community barriers, reducing social isolation, and creating opportunities for all involved to enjoy the same activities and challenges side by side.

You can find out more about Phab and make a donation at Phab: 2024 London Marathon for Phab (enthuse.com). Alternatively, Mariela will happily bake you a loaf of sourdough bread in exchange for a donation.

(*Mariela's bread is DELICIOUS – don't miss this chance to get some!)*

Noticeboard

Saturday April 6th: Vespers with Veneration of the Cross 6pm
Sunday 7th: Third Sunday of Great Lent – Veneration of the Holy Cross
Typika 10.30am followed by Lenten Vespers

Saturday 13th: Vespers 6pm
Sunday 14th: Fourth Sunday of Great Lent – Sunday of Saint John Climacus
Divine Liturgy 10.30am followed by Lenten Vespers

Wednesday 17th: Great Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete 6pm

Friday 19th: Akathist of the Most Holy Mother of God 6pm

Saturday 20th: Vespers 6pm
Sunday 21st: Fifth Sunday of Great Lent – Sunday of Saint Mary of Egypt
Divine Liturgy 10.30am followed by Lenten Vespers

Saturday 27th: LAZARUS SATURDAY Vespers 6pm
Sunday 28th: PALM SUNDAY – ENTRY OF THE LORD INTO JERUSALEM
Divine Liturgy 10.30am followed by Bridegroom Matins
Monday 29th: GREAT AND HOLY MONDAY Bridegroom Matins 6pm
Tuesday 30th: GREAT AND HOLY TUESDAY Bridegroom Matins 6pm
Wednesday May 1st: GREAT AND HOLY WEDNESDAY Holy Unction 6pm
Thursday 2nd:: GREAT AND HOLY THURSDAY
Vespers/Divine Liturgy 10am
Matins/Twelve Gospels 6pm
Friday 3rd: GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY
Vespers 3pm
Matins 6pm
Saturday 4th: GREAT AND HOLY SATURDAY
Vespers/Liturgy 9.30am
PASCHAL MATINS/LITURGY (at SAINT JAMES' CHURCH) 10pm
Sunday 5th: HOLY PASCHA
Vespers 6pm

All services in Saint Anne's unless stated otherwise

*For services in the Romanian parish (Exeter and Newton Abbot) consult https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064673836911 or telephone Fr Julian on **07469 262827**. Similarly for the Torquay parish either visit https://www.facebook.com/standrewtorquay/?locale=en_GB or telephone Robert Skrivanos on **07971 316416**. For services in Plymouth go to plymchurch.com*

Music at Exeter Cathedral

The Four Seasons and the Lark Ascending by Candlelight

Thursday 18 April, 7:30pm–9:30pm at Exeter Cathedral.

London Concertante are delighted to announce the return of their sell-out Vivaldi's Four Seasons by Candlelight concert series. One of the UK's most renowned ensembles, London Concertante has been bringing outstanding quality classical music to audiences across the country for over three decades, creating unforgettable experiences for classical music connoisseurs and newcomers alike.

Programme: **Mozart** – Marriage of Figaro Overture
Vivaldi – The Four Seasons
Ralph Vaughan Williams – The Lark Ascending

Book your ticket

Rachmaninov *All-Night Vigil (Vespers)*

Friday 10 May at 7:30pm

Join Corvus Consort at Exeter Cathedral for a performance of Rachmaninov's *All-Night Vigil (Vespers)*. The Vespers were composed as a Christian response to war, and in our own times of conflict Corvus Consort will intersperse the contemplative and devotional intensity of the 15 sections of Rachmaninov's piece with "Songs of Peace from across Europe".

Book Your Ticket > *Cathedral Life*

Brahms' *Ein Deutches Requiem*

The **Exeter Bach Choir** (including some of our parishioners) will perform Brahms' Requiem in a version for Chamber Orchestra at **Saint David's Church, Exeter at 7.30pm on Saturday April 6th**.

Tickets £18 in advance, £20 on the door. Full-time students and 16 - 18 year old's half price. Children under 16 free. Refreshments will be served before the concert from 7pm.
Book Now

Bishop of Exeter's Open Garden

Explore the Bishop's Palace Garden on **14th and 28th April** for an open day in support of the Devon Historic Churches Trust. The Bishop's Palace Garden covers three acres and is one of the most ancient in Devon. Bounded by the old Roman bank and city wall to the east, and by the Cathedral to the west, it is a haven of peace in the middle of the city. All proceeds go to Devon Historic Churches Trust, our county-wide charity that offers grants for the repair and upkeep of our churches.

FIND OUT MORE > *Cathedral Life*

Forget-me-not Bereavement Café

We invite anyone who has suffered a bereavement of any kind, at any time, to come along to our **Forget-me-not Bereavement Café** for a cup of coffee/tea, cake and a chat. The café will be held once a month on the **fourth Saturday of the month at 10.30am** in the **St Richard Reynolds Centre, Blessed Sacrament Church, Heavitree)**

Come along, and maybe bring a friend with you who you think would also benefit from making contact with others in a friendly relaxed café. There is no need to book just come along: we look forward to seeing you.

CTaX Bulletin

Exeter International Café

Every Sunday 4.30-6pm - for venues see:
https://www.stleonards.church/international-english-cafe/

Exeter International Cafe provides a term-time friendly welcome to all Internationals from 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Sunday afternoons.

An opportunity to practise English with native speakers in a supportive environment. Different themes, guest speakers, with helpful information on living in Exeter and the UK.

See: https://www.stleonards.church/international-english-cafe/ or text 07816 270549 to be added to our WhatsApp international cafe group.

CTaX Bulletin

The World is Crooked and God Straightens It

However pure and just a man may be, there is always an element of sin in him which cannot enter the Kingdom of God and which must be burned up. Our sins are burned up by our sufferings.

Our love of God is measured by our willingness to accept sufferings and misfortunes and to see in them the hand of God. We can find support in the fact that these sufferings are also the measure of the love that God bears us.

Sweat, tears, blood... If sweat is accompanied by inner rebellion, anger, murmuring; if tears are caused by pain, offence, rage; if our blood is shed without faith – the soul will not obtain any benefit. But if all this is accomplished in a spirit of obedience, contrition, and faith, it purifies and elevates us.

The world is crooked and God straightens it. That is why Christ suffered (and still suffers), as well as all the martyrs, confessors and saints – and we who love Christ cannot but suffer as well.

Fr Alexander Elchaninov (1881-1934) *The Diary of a Russian Priest* Faber 1967

Prophet Elias News *is the newsletter of the Parish of the Holy Prophet Elias, Devon, Deanery of Great Britain and Ireland, Archdiocese of Thyateira (Ecumenical Patriarchate) Archbishop: His Eminence Archbishop Nikitas (Lioulias)*

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Contributions for the May issue should reach the Editors at martinolsson827@btinternet.com *or by post at Little Linhay, Bondleigh, EX20 2AJ by Monday 22nd April, please.*

Any opinions expressed in this newsletter are entirely those of the named authors or identified sources and should not be taken as representing the views of the parish as a whole.